

## SHIP UNDER WAY IN CUBAN SWAP

Will Pick Up Supplies In  
Florida In Prisoner Deal

By HELEN DELICH BENTLEY  
[Maritime Editor of The Sun]

The S.S. African Pilot, sailed from Baltimore at 3.05 P.M. yesterday to pick up American Red Cross medicines and foods to be used as ransom for 1,113 Cuban invasion prisoners.

The \$53,000,000 cargo is to be at Port Everglades, Fla., by the time the freighter arrives there Wednesday.

If the current negotiations with Cuban Premier Fidel Castro are consummated successfully, the Baltimore-manned ship will play a dramatic role in a Christmas exchange of human lives for vital medicines and foods.

### Donovan In Miami

As the American-flag ship sailed, James B. Donovan, a New York lawyer who has been trying to obtain the prisoners' release, arrived in Miami to confer with officials of the Cuban Families Committee.

He was accompanied by Alvaro Sanchez and Mrs. Berta Berreto, two key figures in the negotiations.

In Washington, Lincoln White, press officer for the State Department, said he expects Donovan will return to Havana shortly to resume negotiations.

Because of the anxiety to have the prisoners returned to the United States by Christmas, the ship was ordered under way in order to be on hand as soon as loading of the merchandise can be started.

### \$62,000,000 Demanded

Castro has been demanding \$62,000,000 ransom for the captives from the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion attempt of April, 1961.

Medicines and food have been reported in extremely short supply throughout the island country. A Turkish reporter who just left Havana stated that the shortages were creating considerable unrest throughout Cuba.

All of the negotiations in the United States are being carried on by Donovan and the American Red Cross. The Farrell Lines' ship was turned over to the Red Cross for all future orders.

At the State Department, White said that the United States Government is not taking part directly in Donovan's efforts, although various agencies are providing "sympathetic" help.

This help, he said, included validation of Donovan's passport for travel to Cuba and preparations to extend immigration and naturalization aids to the prisoners once they reach this country.

At his news conference last week, President Kennedy expressed sympathy with efforts to free the prisoners.

The African Pilot sailed as soon as its crew was complete. A slight delay was encountered because the doctor who checks out the crew before boarding ships had not been notified in advance so that he would be set up early to examine them.

Capt. Alfred Bourem, who was supervising the deactivation of the freighter in Baltimore, sailed out as its master.

The African Pilot had arrived in Baltimore last Thursday to begin getting ready to go back into the nation's reserve merchant ship fleet. It was being traded in by the Farrell Lines on its new building program.

### Go-Ahead Signal Given

Because of its near state of readiness, the American Red Cross asked for its availability, and the steamship line gave the go-ahead signal.

Yesterday, the Committee for

American Steamship Lines indicated it would give any general assistance needed by Farrell or the American Red Cross to underwrite any costs that might be expended on this particular voyage.

The committee is composed of the nation's fifteen subsidized steamship lines. However, the trade association group emphasized that the Red Cross is in charge and is carrying on all the negotiations.

### Railroads Cooperate

The medicines and foods are being transported to Port Everglades through the cooperation of railroads serving that area.

The retail value of the supplies is quoted at \$53,000,000.

Relatives of the Havana prisoners have expressed confidence that this time the captives would really be freed. An earlier occasion, success was not achieved, although it was near.

The mother of one said, "All I hear sounds good."

CPYRIGHT